

The Michigan Career Development System:

*Building Strategic Partnerships
for Career Development*

March 2002

Prepared for

Michigan Department of Career Development

Prepared by

Public Sector Consultants, Inc.
Lansing, Michigan

Ferris State University
Big Rapids, Michigan

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Public Sector Consultants, Inc.
Lansing, Michigan
www.pscinc.com

Ferris State University
Big Rapids, Michigan
www.ferris.edu

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The Michigan Career Development System:

Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development

BACKGROUND AND MISSION OF THE MDCD

The Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) seeks to develop a system that produces a workforce with the skills required to maintain and enhance the Michigan economy. By housing all career-related activities in a single department, Michigan has created a dynamic state agency that has the authority *and* responsibility to

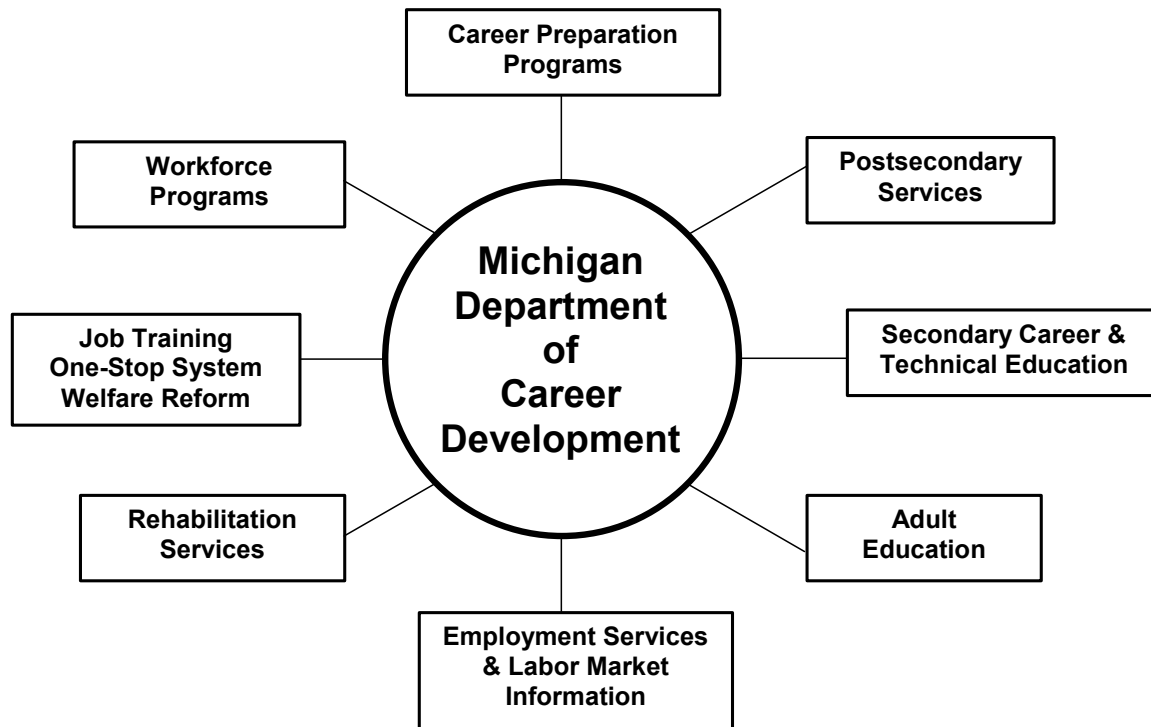
- help people choose career, education, and training services to equip them for their future careers;
- contribute to a solid foundation for Michigan residents in core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies;
- encourage students to excel in higher academics;
- inform Michigan residents about the workplace and how to acquire academic and career skills through vehicles such as career academies, technical education centers and programs, cooperative education, apprenticeships, internships, career pathways, and community college instruction and training;
- facilitate student and worker certifications based on demonstrated competencies and standards endorsed by employers;
- provide labor exchange or placement services that help workers secure employment and employers recruit skilled workers;
- upgrade the skills of the incumbent workforce;
- continually assess students' progress towards moving to quality jobs or education; and
- empower local WDB's and EAG's to plan for dynamic communities.

By joining these programs under a single umbrella, MDCD can channel the state-level resources toward the goals and objectives of local partners. Much of the work of the department is carried out through Michigan's system of 25 Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Each WDB has a local service area, and its primary role is to administer the career

In 2001, the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) was poised to develop a strategic plan and new directions with key stakeholders to secure a successful future. As part of the planning process, the MDCD wanted to include information submitted by local partners. Armed with this information, MDCD will be ready to address new opportunities and challenges as it implements the strategic plan. To assist in this information gathering and analysis project, the MDCD selected Public Sector Consultants, Inc. (PSC) and Ferris State University (FSU) as project partners. This document summarizes the MDCD and career development system, lists the current department goals and objectives, summarizes the "Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development" initiative, and provides information about common goals and strategies from the 25 local WDBs.

development system programs in that region. WDBs run Michigan's system of one-stop centers (Michigan Works! agencies) and lead the department's new strategic planning process, the "Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development" initiative.

Collaborating with the WDBs are Education Advisory Groups (EAGs), whose members are appointed by the local WDBs. The EAGs approve plans for Perkins, technical preparation, and career preparation programs, and also recommend strategies for all education programs in the WDB service region, including career and technical preparation, adult education, and postsecondary education.



MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

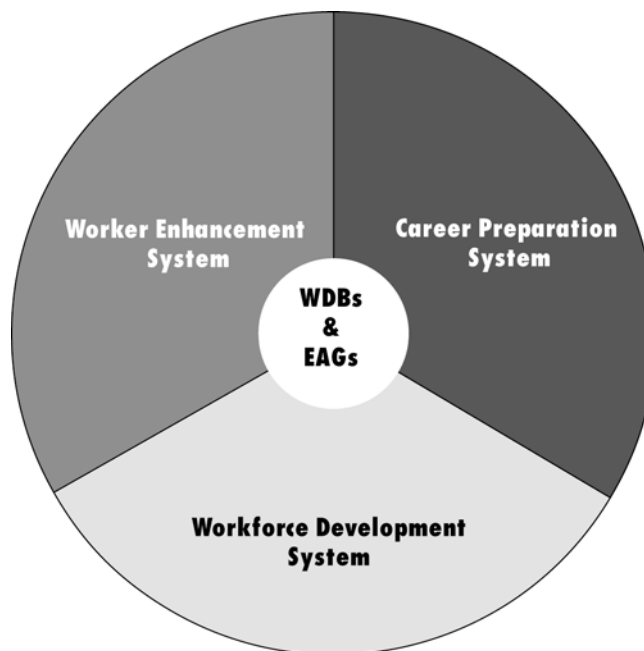
The MDCCD, the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), and the Education Advisory Groups (EAGs) oversee Michigan's career development system, an integrated system of worker training, learning, and placement that can assist Michigan residents at every stage of their working careers. The programs are divided into three broad areas:

- The **Career Preparation System** focuses on emerging workers in schools and colleges, and works to ensure that Michigan students have the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills for success in a career of their choice. This system includes programs in elementary and secondary education (K–12), career and technical education (CTE), community colleges (academic and technical), colleges and universities, and private vocational schools.
- The **Workforce Development System** is targeted for transitioning workers. The system consists of 25 Michigan Works! agencies statewide, offering adult education,

federal job training for youth and adults through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), trade adjustment programs, vocational rehabilitation, Work First/welfare reform programs, the Michigan Works! Service Center system, and the Employment Service.

- The **Worker Enhancement System** is the skills and credentialing system geared toward “entrepreneurial” workers—that is, workers and employers and workers who have the desire to upgrade employee skills for current or future jobs. This system includes employer-based training, customized training, and other programs covering skill upgrading and skill credentials for workers.

THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM



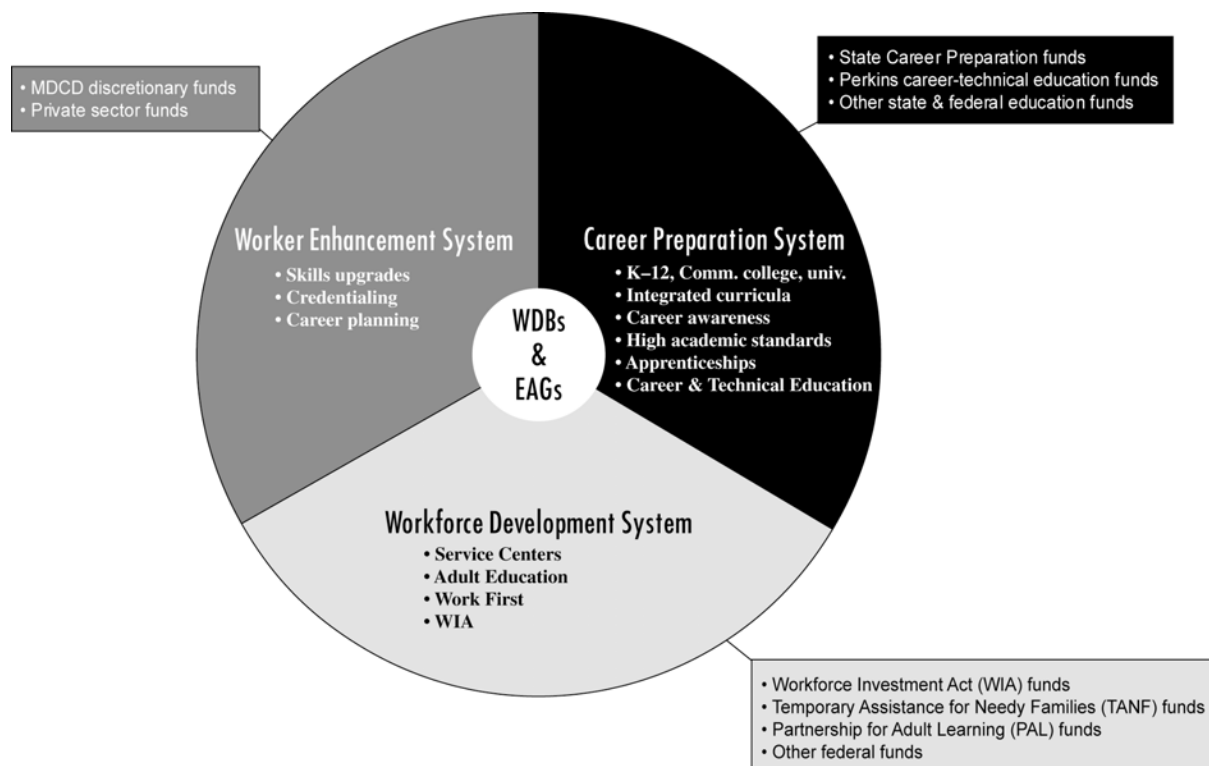
DEPARTMENT GOALS, 2000–2005

Each year MDCD engages in a strategic planning process that sets or adjusts the direction of the agency for the coming year. This process involves managers and employees alike and requires input from the department’s multiple customers, such as employers, schools and colleges. Ultimately, the process seeks to align the plans of operating units with the strategic direction of the department while allowing adjustments each year to address emerging issues or areas of particular emphasis. Evidence of such minor adjustments in MDCD goals appear below:

Goals, 2000–2001

1. Develop an integrated career development system through industry education partnerships at the state, regional, and local levels.
2. Develop an effective, integrated career decision-making and preparation system for youth and adults.
3. Develop an industry-led skill credentialing and quality management system to provide employers with a steady supply of well-prepared workers.
4. Inform and educate the public on Michigan's career development system and how to access and use it effectively.
5. Commit to developing a high-performance agency by building Baldrige quality criteria into internal and external operations.

THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FUNDING STREAMS



Goals, 2002–2005

1. Enhance and sustain an integrated career development system through employer and education partnerships with MDCD activities at the state, regional and local levels.

2. Enhance and sustain an effective, integrated career decision-making, career preparation, and job-matching system for youth and adults.
3. Develop an industry-led skill credentialing and quality management system to provide employers with a steady supply of well-prepared workers.
4. Inform and educate the public on Michigan's career development system and how to access and use it effectively.
5. Become a high performance agency through the integration of Baldrige Quality criteria into internal and external operations.

SUMMARY OF THE BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Starting in February 2000, the MDCD engaged its local WDB partners in a five-step strategic planning initiative, *Building Strategic Partnerships for Career Development*. In this five-phase process, local partners were asked to engage business, education, and government leaders to

- conduct an environmental scan—a synthesis of key community trends and performance measures to create a framework for decision making;
- create a career development report card—assess the current performance of the education and training system and use this assessment along with the environmental scan to create no more than five priority goals for the local career development system;
- engage the community—share the scan and report card goals with the public to gather input and buy-in;
- create a list of strategic assets and a comprehensive plan—match the new three-year goals and objectives with resources, practices, and specific programs that can be used to reach them; and
- develop an operational plan—create annually a list of concrete actions for each school, college, and partner agency at the local level to achieve the community's vision for a successful career development system.

SUMMARY OF WDB STRATEGIC PLANS

Emerging Trends

The trends cited by the Workforce Development Boards mirror many of the economic and social trends found at both the state and national levels.

- The labor market is shifting, primarily from an industrial (labor-intensive) model to a service (knowledge-intensive) model. This ongoing shift is creating a demand for workers with new and different skill sets than those needed for a manufacturing economy, and the demand is manifested in nearly every WDB region (21 of 25).
- This labor shift, in part, creates a gap between the skill sets that employers need and the skills that current and future employees have. There are other causes of this skills

gap, such as social trends—changing family structures and values that put a different emphasis on career and social behavior, for instance, can have an impact on how motivated young people are to take on job responsibilities. Whatever the causes, this skills gap was cited by 16 of 25 WDBs as a noticeable trend.

- Other trends that ranked high on the list in many regions of Michigan are the increasing use of technology, an aging population that contributes to the demand for labor as workers retire, growing pockets of poverty (the “working poor”), increasingly diverse populations, and low or decreasing academic achievement.

The full results of the emerging trends are shown in rank order in Exhibit 1 (the complete summary by region can be found later in this document). It should be noted that local survey methods were not standardized: each WDB commissioned an organization of its own choosing to collect the data for its region. The MDCD’s guidelines were used as a starting point, but the survey questions asked and the data collected were not necessarily the same for each region. Likewise, the definitions and reporting of emerging trends were not standardized. Some WDBs collected and reported on a wide variety of economic, demographic, educational, and social trends, while others identified a much narrower set of issues.

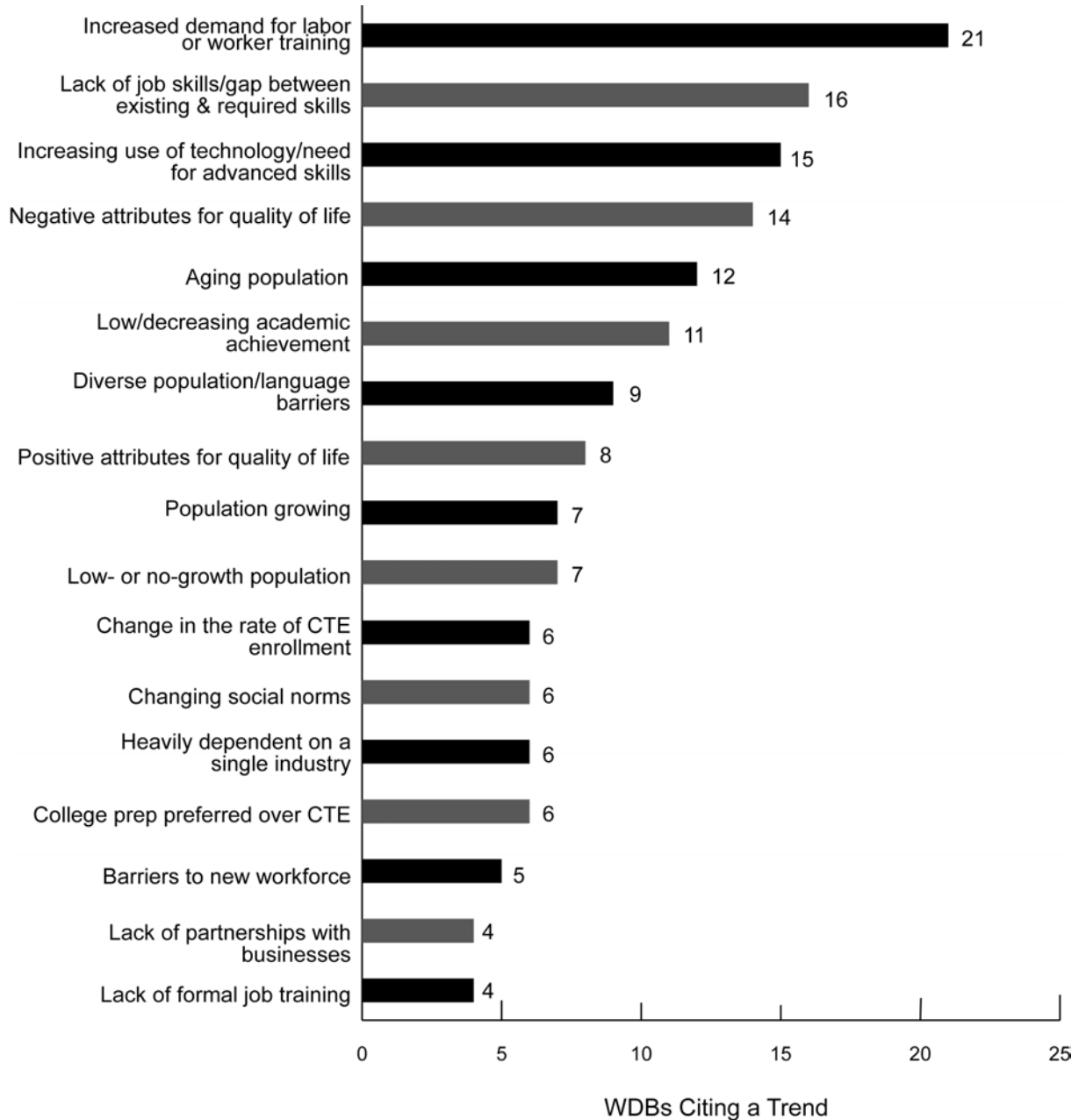
It is also noteworthy that the economy has changed dramatically since this initiative was first commissioned in the spring of 2000. At that time both the national and global economies were strong, unemployment in Michigan was at its lowest level in half a century, and national GDP (gross domestic product) was growing. These statistics have seen a turnaround in the past 18 months that may not be reflected in the emerging economic trends of this report. However, trends in population/demographics and educational performance were apparent then and continue now.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and strategies identified by the WDBs to address the emerging trends are shown in the aggregate in Exhibit 2.

- By far (23 of 25), the number one strategy for dealing with changes in their respective regions is to increase enrollment in the most effective programs sponsored by WDB stakeholders—primarily the Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs), local schools, colleges, and Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs). The most frequently cited initiatives were Career Pathways, Partnership for Adult Learning (PAL) programs, and career-technical education (CTE) programs with a strong track record. WorkKeys was cited frequently as a tool that provides a common language for employers and educators and thus facilitates the effectiveness of career development initiatives.
- Of the next five goals listed most often by the WDBs, four cluster around building and maintaining relationships—primarily between and among the stakeholders of the

EXHIBIT 1-A**Most Prominent Emerging Trends**



SOURCE: Workforce Development Board Summaries, 2000–2001.

EXHIBIT 1-B
Less Frequently Cited Trends

| Trends Cited by 3 WDBs | Trends Cited by 2 WDBs | Trends Cited by 1 WDB |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High/increasing academic achievement • Decreasing school enrollment • Seasonal employment • Need standard measures of workforce readiness • Growing disabled population • Lack of resources for training programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital divide between rich/poor school districts • Career development service providers lack coordination • Increasing school enrollment • Lack of parent involvement • High job turnover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career preparation measures are used in schools • Career development services targeted to unemployed, not current workers • Increased international trade • New businesses not locating in region |

SOURCE: Workforce Development Board Summaries, 2000–2001.

existing WDB structure (career development service providers, educational institutions, employers, parents, and employed and unemployed workers). Communication plays a large role in these strategic plans; both getting the word out about available services and gathering more information about current needs are high on the list of priorities of WDBs around the state.

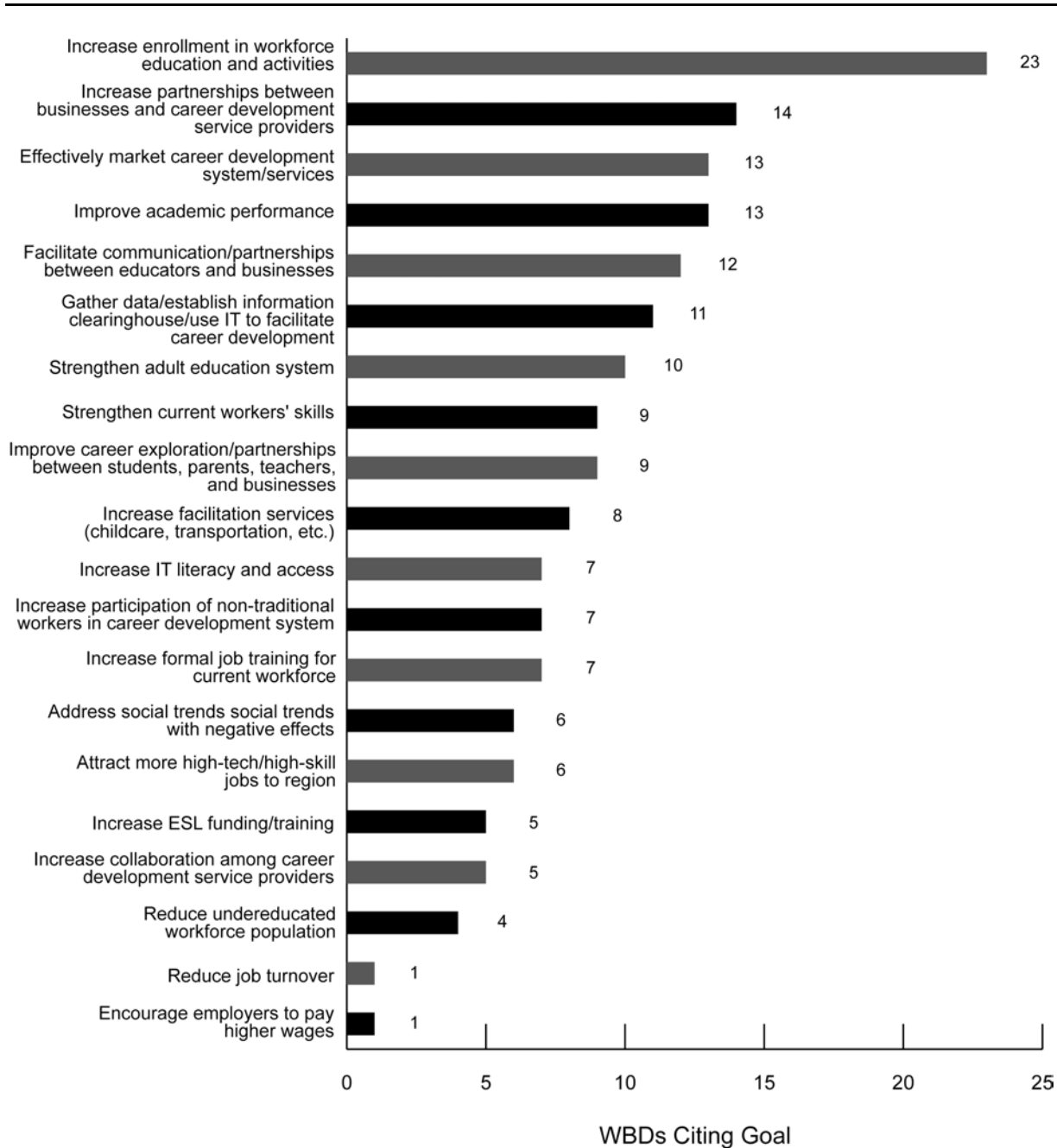
- Increasing academic achievement is also important to these groups. Thirteen of 25 specify increasing performance on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) as a top goal, and improving academic achievement levels (i.e., grades completed) was also cited in that category. Strengthening the adult education system and improving career exploration methods were similarly listed as being important strategies for dealing with economic and social trends throughout the state.

Many of the goals and strategies were linked to trends that were specific to a region. For instance, regions that reported a rapidly increasing immigrant population chose English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) training as a goal; regions that were highly dependent on a single industry focused more on attracting new employers to the area or making it easier for residents to commute to neighboring regions.

It is worth noting that even regions with similar trends did not always focus on the same type of goal. For instance, some regions paid more attention to current worker training than preparation at the K–12 level, even though the shifting labor market trends were the same. Local community colleges were sometimes relied upon heavily for both funding and leadership to address emerging trends, while in other cases a local chamber of commerce was

serving as the primary contributor. In all likelihood, these differences arise from the regional or community structure of the WDB, and each region identifies strengths in different sets of stakeholders. However, these differences play a key role in the analysis of all the strategic plans.

EXHIBIT 2
Most Prominent Goals



SOURCE: Workforce Development Board Summaries, 2000–2001.

ANALYSIS OF WDB STRATEGIC PLANS

Framework

The MDCD prescribed a general framework in its charge to the WDBs, instructing them to conduct their analysis by examining the three components of the state's career development system:

- **Career Preparation System (CPS)**—delivered by K–12 school districts, community colleges, private technical schools, colleges and universities
- **Workforce Development System (WDS)**—delivered by Michigan Works! agencies, adult education programs, Work First programs, and Workforce Investment Act programs
- **Worker Enhancement System (WES)**—delivered by employer-based training programs and customized training activities

Each of the WDBs mentioned this three-sided framework in its introduction, but only a few incorporated it into the findings and goals that were included in their strategic plans. This may demonstrate that the categories are more prescriptive (dictated by the MDCD) than descriptive (reflective of current WDB operations).

Analysis of Emerging Trends

Some trends impact more than a single system (CPS, WDS, WES). By clustering the trends, we see that:

- Approximately two-thirds of the most prevalent trends describe and/or affect the Career Preparation System. Overall, the environmental scans report that students are leaving the formal educational system unprepared for the modern workforce.
- Approximately one-third of the emerging trends apply to or have an impact on the Workforce Development System.
- More than two-thirds of the trends affect the Worker Enhancement System.

It is important to bear in mind that each of these systems is not only a part of the MDCD, but also part of a different network that impacts its activities. For instance, the Career Preparation System is primarily a part of the greater educational system governed by local school boards and the Michigan Department of Education (among others), and some of the trends emerging within the CPS may result from actions of that other system. The Workforce Development System is a passive recipient of numerous economic systems—many of which are manifested in the emerging trends data. Finally, the Worker Enhancement System is part of a much larger local, state, national, and international network that creates and is impacted by economic (and social) trends.

Analysis of Goals

By categorizing the goals identified in Exhibit 2 according to the three-tiered career development system framework, we see that:

- Out of 20 identified goals, more than half (11) apply to or have an impact on the Career Preparation System.
- Almost all of the identified goals (18 of 20) pertain to the Workforce Development System.
- Less than half of the stated goals—nine of 20—affect the Worker Enhancement System.

It is interesting to note that although the Workforce Development System was least impacted by the emerging trends identified by the WDBs, the bulk of the goals are geared toward this system. Likewise, the Worker Enhancement System was the most affected by the emerging trends, yet it plays the smallest part in the goals; this is due in part to the expectation that industry will bear most of the cost of upgrading the skills of incumbent employees. The concentration on Workforce Development System goals is a consequence of the emphasis on workforce programs of the funding sources directly administered by the WDBs. However, if the WDBs are to truly serve as a bridge or facilitator of the entire career development system, they must find a way to effectively address the workforce trends where they are felt the most (the Worker Enhancement System) and apply resources accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Despite the great variation in regional economies, goals and strategies to improve the career development system have much in common across the regions:

- Increase enrollment in effective workforce and education and activities
- Build and maintain relationships with business and education
- Increase K-12 academic achievement and provide more adult education and training

A career development system for Michigan has been developed. Strategic plans to maintain and enhance the system are in place. The leadership to carry out the strategic plans – the Workforce Development Boards and Education Advisory Groups – is firmly established. These groups are continually meeting to update and improve their strategic plans and act upon their operational plans.

Summaries of the Local Strategic Plans

Barry-Branch-Calhoun

(Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Population shifts
 - Barry and Branch counties expect higher than average rate of growth
 - Fewer people in 0–19 age group; more in 65 and older
 - Increasingly diverse population
 - Slower per capita income growth
- Shifting labor market
 - Short term (1996–2006) composition:
 - Service-based jobs: 20 percent
 - Manufacturing jobs: 18 percent
 - Professional specialty: 17 percent
 - Marketing and sales: 15 percent
 - Long term (2002–2020) composition
 - Jobs requiring computer literacy: 85 percent
 - Service-based jobs: 32 percent
 - Manufacturing: 30 percent
 - Retail trade: 28 percent
 - Government, Education: 10 percent
- Changing skill requirements
 - Higher levels of literacy, math, problem solving, and “soft” skills
 - Increased need to use technology to accomplish tasks
- Academic/preparation issues
 - MEAP scores lag state average
 - Low socioeconomic status of one-third of students is major factor in academic performance of students
 - Employers report difficulty recruiting qualified workers, especially technical
 - Employers state need for employees with “soft” and employability skills
 - Many students unaware of skills necessary for job market
 - Completers of Work First, Adult WIA programs continue to start in minimum wage, service positions

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase the development and use of educational development plans (EDPs):
 - Regional EDP coordinator to be hired by the Calhoun ISD to assist 13 local districts in EDP process to be internally coordinated and institutionalized
 - Work with local community college to facilitate the EDP process from the community's college end.
 - Implement Career Pathway System in each local school district and tie Workforce Investment Act Youth programs to EDPs
- Work to improve/raise the skills of the entry-level workforce
 - Support local community college's Business Career Academy, job retention training, and certification programs; local community college's M-TEC workforce readiness program, coordinate with STRIVE's attitudinal and work readiness training
 - Workforce Board to redeploy additional funding into Workforce Investment Act (W.I.A.) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for job specific skills training
 - Utilize local community college's employment services and Goodwill Industries program
- Strengthen incumbent worker skills using existing resources at the local community college, Michigan Works! Service Centers, Goodwill Industries, and M-TEC Center
- Work to address digital divide and increase basic computer/technology literacy by developing community access centers
- Improve the performance of adult education system and the use of competency-based instruction for adult learners
 - Use local community college and ISD to provide adult customized training partnership with open entry/open exit
 - Implement the Partnership for Adult Learning Program (PAL) with performance-based reimbursement contracts and competency-based instruction to increase the basic literacy skills of the local labor force

Berrien-Cass-Van Buren

(Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Young adults not staying in region when they leave home
- Aging workforce
- Slow population/labor force growth
- Increasingly diverse workforce
- Housing and transportation are barriers to employment
- Shifting labor market
- Employers need information on national, state, and local best practices for hiring and advancing workforce

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Produce K–14 students who are prepared for academic growth and personal success
- Help employers successfully employ the available tri-county labor pool
- Create a tri-county workforce intelligence system that will enable the enhancement of local workforce skills
- Continuously improve the workforce development system to exceed customer expectations

Capital Area

(Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- The Capital Area dropout rate has increased from 4.1 percent in 1995–96 to 8.3 percent in 1997–98, even as the state rate has declined to 4.6 percent
- The aging population means 5,000 retiring workers will have to be replaced each year over the next five to ten years, mainly in the manufacturing and service industries
- The number of students completing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program has dropped back to 1994–95 rates, an unacceptably low number if the demand for skilled workers is to be met
- Lack of skills prevents many residents from finding and keeping jobs or pursuing education and training
- Language is a significant barrier to employment—chiefly for residents of Hispanic and Asian origin

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Goal 1: Stabilize the High School dropout rate for the 2000–01 school year; then reduce it by one percentage point each year for the next five years
- Goal 2: Increase career preparation
 - Implement at least one Career Pathway school district in each county by Fall 2001
 - Increase enrollment in key high-wage, high-skill and high-demand programs
 - Establish a pilot postsecondary Workforce Skill Preparation Academy by March 2001
- Goal 3: Show evidence of increased performance among students and adult learners:
 - Increase the percentage of students with satisfactory performance on the MEAP tests by two-and-a-half percentage points each year
 - Implement WorkKeys preparation in one school district in each county by Fall 2000 with testing in Spring 2001
 - Prepare and test adult workers using WorkKeys in the region's One-Stop Centers beginning January 2001
- Goal 4: Increase English as a Second Language (ESL) funding by \$100,000 in 2001 and by \$200,000 in 2002; facilitate communication and programmatic collaboration among educational institutions, businesses, and community groups that promote the integration of ESL populations into the workforce

Central Area

(Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, and Montcalm Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Growing economy increased need for workers at all skill levels
- Government employs 28 percent—larger than average public sector
- Wholesale and retail trade, utilities, finance, government, and manufacturing job increases outpace statewide gains
- Employment shifting from manufacturing to services
- Employers cite need for technical training in all aspects of technology
- Employers continue to indicate need for incumbent worker training
- Growing population
- Aging population
- Uneven employment
 - Labor force expanded 12.7 percent since 1990, employment gain of 19.9 percent
 - Relatively high unemployment among 16–19 year-olds, Hispanic males, black males, and other minority females
 - Higher than average labor force participation
- Educational achievement rates increasing, but still lower than state average

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Prepare students for workplace readiness
 - Align curriculum with MEAP objectives in the K–12 schools
 - Increase number of school districts using Career Pathways
- Support career preparation and technical training for secondary and postsecondary students
 - Create a career and technical education-marketing program
 - Increase educational participation and partnerships with business
- Assist employers with recruitment and incumbent worker training by developing a collaborative marketing program
 - Increase employer awareness and use of services through a marketing program
 - Increase incumbent worker enrollments into occupational programs
- Support management of data system and workforce development in region

Central Upper Peninsula

(Alger, Delta, Dickenson, Marquette, Menominee, and Schoolcraft Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Low/no population growth; birth rates declining
 - Aging population
 - Young people leaving area when they reach adulthood
- Decreasing school enrollments
- Above-average MEAP scores
- Increasing demand for higher-skilled employees
- Community values college prep education over career technical education
- Continuing education needs are increasing to keep job skills current
- Sparse information on labor skills and availability or training done by employers
- Much employment is seasonal and low-wage
- Business must be recruited to locate in region

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Achieve 90% employer (having over 50 or more employees) customer satisfaction rating for job seekers possessing skills at or above desired levels
 - Strengthen curricula in the direction of employability skills
 - Provide multiple assessment opportunities for students, workers, and potential workers
- Develop a seamless educational system providing life-long learning opportunities, where each public school and institutions of higher learning will actively participate in at least one career contextual learning curriculum)
 - Work with businesses and education to create curricula that provide contextual learning (i.e., work based learning)
 - Design a comprehensive career awareness system starting early in the educational system and continuing throughout the work life of all citizens
 - Promote the benefits of career technical and 2-year post secondary occupational education to students and parents.
 - Develop partnerships among education, business and industry
- Develop a labor market information exchange system that tracks local current and future trends and needs that will result in: business attraction to the area, just in time demand occupation training and enhanced career preparation that will result in an increase in the number of job seekers placed into employment.
 - Set up information system at each Michigan Works! service center to track worker availability
 - Develop business retention database systems between Michigan Works! Service Centers and local Economic Development Organizations.

- Recruit and provide an adequate supply of job seekers to at least 90% of employers utilizing the Michigan Works! Michigan Department of Career Development's Michigan Talent Bank/Job Bank Labor Exchange System.
 - Develop multiple points of access to WorkKeys
 - Develop customer management system to forecast hiring trends and tracking service after the sale
 - Provide incentives to employers through education and workforce development partnerships
 - Develop community based partnerships to provide support services (childcare, transportation, etc.) to job seekers
- *Create multiple opportunities for employers to access skill training for existing employees that will result in at least ten businesses using the WorkKeys Profiling and assessment system, and 3,000 incumbent workers will receive employer driven customized training.*
 - Develop business survey system to gather data on training needs and current use

EMERGING TRENDS:

- City employment trends are positive, although still lagging behind those of the region.
- Earnings per worker continue to be higher than the state as a whole, although per capita income is lower.
- While some key industries show growth, the overall rate of job creation is lower in the county than in the state.
- The rate of decline in the city's population is decreasing.
- City education attainment levels for associate degrees, some college, and apprenticeships are better than the region, while the percent of residents with high school diplomas or GEDs and four-year and more college degrees lag behind the region.
- The connection between formal education and career opportunities is growing for the city and the region.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase educational attainment
 - Vigorously facilitate high school completion for youth and adults
 - Effectively deliver GED instruction for out-of-school youth and adults
- Improve academic performance
 - Significantly enhance academic performance in K-12 classrooms and on standardized tests
 - Soundly deliver academic developmental/remedial services for in- and out-of-school youth and adults
- Enhance workforce readiness/advancement
 - Objectively assess workplace readiness skills
 - Actively cultivate employability skills and preparation for advancement
 - Intensely encourage workplace preparedness for K-12 and post-secondary students
 - Productively direct employment and training services to special populations
 - Capably deliver employer-driven customized training activities
 - Efficiently provide appropriate support services for individuals establishing themselves in the workforce

East Central

(Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Iosco, Ogemaw, and Roscommon Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Well-off retirees' lifestyles clash with working-class locals
- Double-digit population growth from 1990–2000
- Population aging more rapidly than state average
- High poverty rates
- Low educational attainment
- Pockets of very high and very low unemployment rates
- Economy still relies on low-paying tourism
- Most employers have fewer than nine employees—hard to gauge their needs

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- The MWA and area partners will meet area employers' need of an adequate supply of qualified employees in the projected fastest-growing job growth areas
 - Increase the availability of training programs to all customers
- Increase and enhance the employability of adult education graduates by having students obtain an Occupational Skills Certificate with their GED
- Devise and implement a marketing plan to inform MWA employers of the range of training services offered by the MWA and workforce development systems and complete and compile an employer needs assessment

Eastern Upper Peninsula

(Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Steady decline in unemployment rate over the last decade, but the rate is still more than twice the state rate
- Seasonal employment results in extreme swings in unemployment rates
- Below state average in educational attainment
 - 26.4–30.4 percent of 25+ year-olds lack H.S. diploma (23.2 percent MI)
 - 9.6–10.8 percent have bachelor's degree (17.4 percent in MI)
- Government jobs comprise nearly half of all jobs (more than 3x state rate), while manufacturing comprises only 5 percent of employment (21.4 percent statewide)
- Per capita income and per capita income growth lag behind the state as a whole
- Young adults are leaving area for better jobs
- Declining birth rate leads to declining school enrollments, less funding
- Employers raise issues of deteriorating work ethics, challenge of attracting and retaining skilled workers

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase workplace readiness
 - Strengthen the comprehensive career awareness and exploration system
 - Promote and market the benefits of career technical and two-year postsecondary occupational education to students and parents
 - Improve career preparation and technical training for secondary and postsecondary students
 - Expand work-based learning opportunities for secondary students
 - Develop and design skill training programs to address skills needed by employers
 - Ensure that plans for categorical programs include activities that support goals for the area's strategic plan
- Improve academic performance in region
 - Encourage employers to emphasize the value of education and use school records in the hiring process
 - Improve basic skills curriculum
 - Providing multiple assessment opportunities to students
 - Offer technology training opportunities for educators
 - Align curriculum with state benchmarks and standards to improve MEAP scores
 - Increase parental involvement and partnerships between business/industry at all education levels

- Attract more high tech/skill jobs to region
 - Support availability of a highly skilled workforce
 - Attract high-skilled jobs through providing high-tech academic programs
 - Work with other agencies to attract employers to the region
 - Work with economic developers to market the area to prospective employers and assist the employers with skill training

Genesee-Shiawassee

(Genesee and Shiawassee Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Out-migration of workforce because of growth in business and industry in southeast Michigan
- Shift from the automotive age to the communication/information age
- Increased enrollment of local educational institutions
- Creation of international trade agreements with the U.S. (Canadian/U.S. trade)
- Growth in personal income for workers has averaged less than 1 percent
- Unemployment rate is up 6 percent since 1990
- Genesee County experiencing less growth in business and industry than Shiawassee County
- Female-headed households with children increasing
- Teen pregnancy rate is 33 percent higher than state average
- Non-completion rate for 9th graders has increased by 50 percent in the last decade
- Growing level of poverty (60 percent of Flint students receive meal assistance)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Develop a community and international business plan to increase the number of new business start-ups and high-wage job opportunities
 - Work with local colleges and universities, local economic development agencies to build on U.S./Canadian trade alliance and create businesses that serve major corporations and have international strategies
- Reduce teen pregnancy
- Continue to support the K–12 systems to increase MEAP scores by establishing a system for evaluating school performance beyond the use of MEAP assessments (use data from sources such as graduation levels and occupational preparedness)
- Implement use of WorkKeys and Vocational Focusing for skill assessment and development for present and future employees
- Increase employment in health occupations by emphasizing the health care field in K–12 school system as well as local colleges
 - Offer Operation Fast Break to help area health systems with their employment needs
- Reduce the number of “working poor” by establishing an employer case management system that will support entry-level workers as they adjust to the work environment
- Establish an incentive-reward-scholarship program to encourage the working poor to increase their skill level

Kalamazoo-St. Joseph

(Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Area's employment history and forecasts show less growth than the state
- Worker earnings and per capita income not keeping pace with neighboring counties
- Net out-migration; those moving in have less income than those moving out
- Despite difficulty many employers have recruiting proficient employees, placement rates from technical/occupational programs are sub-optimal
 - Employers cannot find qualified workers at reasonable wage levels
- Entry-level workers lack essential workplace skills
- MEAP scores not keeping pace with state averages
- Persistent and significant poverty levels, less than state average, exist in area

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Enhance workplace readiness skills using WorkKeys in high school and community colleges and/or incumbent workers focusing on Reading, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information assessments
- Improve employment and income circumstances for Workplace Development Program participants by assisting in improving their skill levels (including the "soft skills") and overcoming any barriers to employment

Kent-Allegan

(Allegan and Kent Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Unemployment rates continue to decline with most layoffs occurring in the manufacturing sector
- Graduates are leaving high school without the proper basic skills to compete in job market
- Increasingly diverse workforce with dramatic increases in Hispanic, Asian and African-American populations
- Community appears to value and promote college prep education over career technical education
- Shortage of technical/skilled workers in sectors including manufacturing, health services and retail
- More working poor despite increases in median and per capita income in both counties

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Improve the career awareness, knowledge, and experience of youth in order to prepare them for work
 - Partnering with business and industry, education, and community services to help youth to gain the knowledge and experiences needed to be successful in the work world
 - Incorporate Career Pathways grades 8–12, develop workforce clearinghouse advisory board to promote work-based learning experiences for students
- Increase the number of current and future workers with basic academic and employability skills
 - Provide programs that will improve basic skills curriculum in K–12, incorporate employability skills, job-seeking classes within curriculum
 - Provide an opportunity for multiple assessment options for ALL high school students (ACT, MEAP, WorkKeys)
 - Provide flexible programming for adults to develop their basic skills, including English language skills
- Increase the number of workers with technical job-specific skills
 - Expand successful practices in technical training for new and incumbent workers
 - Continually identify the job skill requirements of area employers
- Advocate and facilitate elimination of barriers to employment by working with area agencies to:
 - Provide 24 hour/ 7 day per week affordable childcare opportunities
 - Make transportation available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - Systematically approach solutions to workplace substance abuse problems
 - Provide easier access to affordable health care services

(Livingston County)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Rapidly growing population: 90 percent increase expected between 1990 and 2020
- Aging population
 - County median age to rise to 39 by 2020
 - Percentage of school age population to decrease steadily through 2020
- Lack of diversity in resident population
 - 96 percent white in 2000 Census (98.2 percent in 1990)
 - Greater diversity in workforce than resident population
- Low poverty levels
 - Only 4 percent of population below federal poverty levels
 - 25 percent at or below HUD's low-to-moderate income status
 - Less than 1 percent receives any form of public assistance
- High Employment
 - Unemployment rate consistently below state average
 - Labor force grew 25 percent from 1990 to 1999
 - High labor force participation rates suggest limited growth possibility
 - Most growth in services and retail trade
- Wages largely competitive with state and regional trends; increasing at faster rate than inflation
- Mixed education results
 - Schools consistently perform better than state average on MEAP assessments, graduation rates, and dropout rates
 - One in five adults lack a H.S. diploma or are deficient in basic skills
 - 37 percent of workforce say formal education did not prepare them for their job (63 percent say it did)
- Very high degree of inward and outward commuting
 - Employers report more than half of workforce from another county
 - 60 percent of county residents work outside Livingston County.
 - 60 percent of workforce commutes one or more hours to work daily; more than 25 percent commute two hours or more.
- Lack of affordable housing
- Worker shortage has created a demand for regional public transit
- Increased demand for childcare solutions, particularly in the smaller communities
- Computer use on the job is widespread
- All school districts employ Career Pathways approach, although use varies
- Parental involvement in children's career planning is not documented
- Government job-training programs lack sufficient resources

- Not much formal job training offered by employers

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Reduce undereducated workforce population
- Expand successful CD programs
- Improve academic performance
- Survey employers about their use of and satisfaction with the Talent Bank
- Increase formal job training for current workforce
- Increase the perceptions of positive correlation between formal education and jobs
- Reduce job turnover
- Work toward more affordable housing
- Decrease the number of commuters
- Increase support service availability (childcare, transportation, etc.)

Macomb-St. Clair

(Macomb and St. Clair Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Economic expansion of the past eight years has brought considerable economic growth and development to the area
- Demand for labor exceeds supply of labor
- Growing need for workers with greater and more diverse skills
 - Employers have difficulty recruiting sufficiently skilled manufacturing and technical workers
 - Increasing reliance on skilled immigrants under the H1B visas
- Area remains heavily dependent on the technical and administrative occupations in the auto industry
 - Current students do not perceive significance of employment opportunities in manufacturing, resulting in career preparation system not providing workers with necessary skills
- Growing retired and senior citizen populations
- Increasing numbers of “new Americans” (residents who speak a language other than English at home, who possess green cards or visas, who are not citizens, and to whom English is not a native tongue)
- Growth in number of educated people, but possible mismatch between skills possessed and skills desired
- Need for greater career preparation system alignment between secondary and post-secondary providers
- Need for greater ties between educational institutions and private sector
- Large numbers of disabled and low-income workers do not possess the computer literacy skills necessary to meet the requirements of high-skills manufacturing
- MEAP scores keeping pace with state averages, but uneven distribution between school districts

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase the number of “new Americans” served by the workforce development system
- Increase the number of young people with entry-level skill standards
- Increase the number of mature workers holding jobs and provide appropriate training to increase skill levels
- Increase the number of low-income workers served by the system
- Increase the participation of disabled people in the labor force
- Enhance workplace readiness skills.
- Develop an aligned workforce development system

Muskegon-Oceana

(Muskegon and Oceana Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Increasing emphasis on technology in workplace—65 percent now require technical/vocational skills
- Some school districts score below average on math and science MEAP
- Aging workforce must be replaced—not enough workers for both replacement and expansion
- Unemployment rate lowest in recorded history; businesses having difficulty filling positions
 - Health care industry predicting severe shortage of workers by 2010
 - Demand for employees in hospitality, healthcare, and service sector outpacing supply
- Women pursuing technical jobs at lower rate than men, especially in IT
- Disparity of technological resources from school district to school district

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase participation and completion rates in occupational training programs, especially on-the-job training for workers who need skill enhancing or additional training to obtain better employment opportunities
 - Collaborate with educational entities already in the region and aggressively recruit, pursue, and implement increased training options and delivery of the programs
- Realign labor force with labor market by continually sharing and assessing training needs and developing strategies for ongoing, collaborative response to improving the skills of the region's workers with on-demand training
- Improve workforce readiness skills for both new and incumbent workers
- Educate the Muskegon and Oceana communities on current and projected trends in the marketplace by developing and implementing a broad-based, collaborative information campaign targeted to parents, educators, counselors, students, employers, etc. about “gold collar” or technical careers

Northeast

(Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Infrastructure (both physical and technological) must be enhanced to make NE Michigan an economically competitive business environment
- Low population spread over a large geographic area.
- Despite continued efforts to diversify the economy, Northeast Michigan is still heavily dependent on the tourism industry, which predominantly provides low wage employment.
- Seasonal economy--very low summer unemployment and very high winter unemployment, in portions of the region.
- After cyclical decreases in technical programs experienced by the community colleges between 1995 and 1999, enrollments in such programs are on the rise again at the three community colleges as well as the recently opened M-TEC in Gaylord.
- MEAP scores vary across the region—as much as 18 points above and below state average.
- CTE programming is closely aligned with local business and industry needs.
- New CTE programs are being established which will help to meet the employer demands, which have exceeded enrollments in CTE programs.
- Many graduates of CTE programs participate in some continuing education (between 43-75% of the CTE graduates, varies by CTE center and program).
- Decrease in the 18-44 age group due to out-migration-- from 34.8% down to 27% of region's population as compared with 39.2% of the population the age group statewide.
- Age group 45 years and older increasing as retirees move to region.
- Increasing demand for health care workers, including RNs, LPNs, and CENAs
- Placements from workforce training initiatives have increased from 30% in 1997 to 54% in 1999.
- Current levels of funding available through EDJT and other state/federal sources are not adequately meeting the demands for training needs in the region.
- Due to various eligibility criteria many businesses in the region apparently do not meet the state funding guidelines to be eligible for training and re-training assistance.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Retain existing economic base and attract new business and industries
- Increase academic achievement (MEAP)
- Increase workforce readiness and strengthen job training
- Increase available workforce
- Provide opportunities for the region to collectively problem-solve
- Promote new and enhance existing partnerships

- Enhance and support academics and career options, including career pathways
- Develop marketing strategies to promote regional resources both locally and outside the region

Northwest

(Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Overall population growth three times state average; labor force growth 4 percent greater than state average
 - Largest growing proportion is white females, aged 65+
 - Largest minorities are Native Americans and Hispanics
 - High influx of Eastern European and Asian immigrants
- Average unemployment rate 3 percent higher than state average
- Earnings growing by nearly 7 percent over past 10 years, but still below state average
- Nearly 12 percent of households in poverty—mostly “working poor”
- Growing population of disabled individuals; many are working
- Fastest-growing occupations in construction and services industries
- Affordable housing is one of the biggest impediments to recruiting and retaining workers
- Violent crime rate 60 percent below state average
- 11 percent of residents cite cost as barrier to health care; high percentage of employers do not provide health insurance benefits
- Employers cite increasing sophistication of functions performed by computers, need for constant skill upgrading and retraining, increasing needs for ESL assistance, and increasing bifurcation between high skill/high wage and low skill/low wage positions.
- Schools meeting or exceeding state averages in MEAP scores
- HS dropout rate at or below state average.
- Employers report a lack of essential (core) workplace skills

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Improve and increase incumbent worker training, using redirected funds belonging to asset organizations
- Improve core competencies and employability skills of current and future workforce, using redirected funds belonging to asset organizations
 - Establish baseline data on Essential Workforce Skills
 - Use WorkKeys to measure increases in competency levels at both secondary and post-secondary levels
 - Create ESL instruction capacity in certain learning labs
- Improve links between school curriculum and workplace requirements
 - Expand Career Prep activities in K–12 local districts and ISDs.

(Oakland County)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Some residents lack important employment skills
- More than half of the county's K–12 students don't have an educational development plan (EDP)
- The county's career development service providers lack coordination and integration
- The county's businesses are, in large part, unaware of the many CD services available to them; more partnerships between business and CD service providers should be developed
- The county must recruit/train its non-traditional workers to enter, re-enter, and/or advance in the labor force to meet economic needs

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase the number of pre-schoolers, K–12 students, postsecondary education students, and adult learners who receive workforce readiness services and develop an educational development plan
- Increase partnerships among service providers from each subsystem of the career development system
- Increase the number of partnerships between business and service providers from the three subsystems of the career development system and offer more teacher externships, worker/student internships, and job shadowing experiences that occur at businesses.
- Increase the number of unemployed, underemployed, and non-traditional workers who are recruited and trained through the three subsystems of the CDS and who are then placed in the county's unfilled jobs
- Marketing strategy for all three subsystems of the career development system will be improved for better customer awareness

(Ottawa County)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Rapidly-growing population
- Aging population: declining growth in workforce
 - Need to find a way to bring nontraditional workers into workforce, with necessary skills
- Low consumption of CTE and job training programs
- Poor technology infrastructure
- Changing family/social structure brings about changing demands in workers' lives
 - New/increased childcare options are necessary

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Continue to build business and education collaboration to better meet the changing workforce needs
 - Increase work-based learning opportunities for students
 - Employers must be particularly active in this area
- Promote and provide training for high-demand, high-skilled jobs, including those not requiring a four-year degree
- Use WorkKeys assessment to identify potential employees for businesses utilizing assessment scores as part of the hiring criteria; use assessments to improve the employability skills of current and prospective employees
- Create more opportunities for a diverse workforce
 - Increase ESL training
- Work across geographic boundaries to leverage resources by bringing together partners to address common issues such as IT and cultivation of potential employees

Saginaw-Midland-Bay

(Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Economy shifting from manufacturing to service
- Continued growth in technical and skilled jobs
- Shortage of skilled workers in almost all fields
- Stable population levels
- Most residents work in region
- Room for educational achievement to improve
- Career and technical education enrollment increase

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Improve career preparation and enhance workplace readiness skills.
- Increase GED participation, stabilize and improve high school completion rates, and reduce the dropout rate
- Improve academic competency, basic skills, and employability skills for students and adults
- Improve employment opportunities and income levels for workforce development program participants

South Central

(Hillsdale, Jackson, and Lenawee Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Aging workforce
- Young adults leaving region when they leave home
- More residents commuting out of region than outsiders commuting in
- Barriers to new workforce entrants
- People not prepared for workforce; current workers need retraining
- CD services are not well-known, don't serve right groups

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase public awareness of workforce development issues in the region to enhance economic development and community planning
 - Establish information clearinghouse
- Improve academic achievement and workplace readiness to ensure competitiveness in the global economy.
 - Encourage local schools to use WorkKeys to assess both 9th and 12th grade students in applied mathematics and reading for information
 - Workforce Development Board will encourage employers that are using WorkKeys to profile jobs and share current workforce needs with the school districts and educators in their county
 - Establishing a compact between community agencies, employers and educators
- Enhance incumbent worker skill levels and encourage lifelong learning for employers to remain globally competitive
- Increase public awareness of the connection of the education, career preparation, and workforce development systems
- Enhance employer recruitment and employment practices to create new opportunities for all potential workers in the region

Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA)

(Monroe and Wayne Counties, excluding the city of Detroit)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Over the past five years, the high school completion rate has increased dramatically in Wayne County (except Detroit) while decreasing slightly in Monroe County
- Largest obstacle to economic growth is lack of workers with needed skills.
 - Gap exists between skills provided in K–12 and skills needed in workforce
 - Employers are increasing their use of community colleges and in-house training in order to provide market-specific training.
- Variations in technology use and training have resulted in a “digital divide” between wealthier and poorer districts

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Diminish the gap between K–14 education output and industry needs by 20 percent by 2004
 - First establish the baseline of the current gap between industry needs and education output
 - Increase access to information technology resources for students, teachers, and families within the region
 - Implement and increase Career Pathways framework
 - Use programs that are working in the region, such as Bridge to Advanced Manufacturing Careers and Education at Henry Ford Community College and/or Monroe County Intermediate School District making 12th graders do a Capstone, which is a co-op, job shadowing, or internship
- Improve Work Keys levels and employability skills for all adult learners by 20 percent by 2004
 - Offer specific training for business and industry employees such as the Ford Motor Company dealer training or Oakwood Health Systems combination of on-the-job experience with the necessary skill specific classroom training

Thumb Area

(Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Unemployment rates have increased considerably
- Population growing
- Many workers with advanced skills commute out of the region to work
- Employers have difficulty finding employees because of numerous barriers
 - Substance abuse
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
- Technology is changing the nature of work
 - Fastest growth for skilled trades (12.2 percent) and technicians (11.4 percent)
 - Skills needed for entry-level technicians and operators increasing
 - Strongest demand for IT and allied-health workers
 - Almost one-third of the fastest-growing occupations require a college education
- Employers are increasingly forced to hire workers with insufficient basic and employability skills.
 - Mostly small businesses, they are less able to deal with training needs

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Ensure that all students have academic and workplace-readiness skills
 - Promote and implement a variety of valid approaches and/or assessments to increase MEAP scores
- Help students make good postsecondary education and career choices
 - Expand educational development plans
 - Increase completion rates for CTE programs
- Remove barriers to employment for adult workers
 - Expand childcare options
- Systematically address workforce needs and challenges of employers
 - Gather employer retention data and share with region
 - Prepare “just-in-time” training opportunity list

Washtenaw County

(Washtenaw County)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Washtenaw County is the third fastest growing county in SE Michigan, after its immediate neighbors, Oakland and Livingston counties
- Median per capita income has far exceeded and will continue to exceed state median and that of any other county
- Despite other success, significant level of poverty (12 percent) still persists
 - Not all high-growth jobs pay a livable wage
 - Many open jobs require high skill levels
 - Persons with disabilities continue to experience higher levels of unemployment and poverty than other demographic groups
- County residents are among most highly educated in nation
 - Above-average MEAP scores, high school graduation rates, annual college graduates, adults with high school diploma, adults with at least a bachelor's degree
- Most new job growth in services industries, decreasing levels in manufacturing sector
- Small businesses drive the area economy
- IT positions are becoming particularly important for future growth
- Employers indicate continued difficulty recruiting employees with sufficient IT skills
- Health care and life sciences/biotech positions are becoming increasingly important to the county economy

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Increase the number of Michigan Works! Service Center customers who obtain employment at small or medium-sized employers
 - Emphasis on information technology and healthcare/life sciences jobs
 - Encourage the ongoing collaboration of companies to create strategies such as the creation of sector councils for addressing labor shortages
- Increase the number of small and medium employers receiving recruitment, hiring, worker retention, or advancement assistance through the Michigan Works! service centers
- Increase the number of Michigan Works! service center low-income, working/non-working or Work First customers, including persons with disabilities, who obtain full-time jobs with employer-paid health benefits
 - Coordinate and offer auxiliary services that will enable the poor to work, such as childcare, transportation, housing and related services
- Increase the number of Washtenaw county high school students participating in career preparation experiences by implementing the Career Pathways program, Career Job Fair (JAM), Parent's University, Career Connections plus other coordinated efforts

West Central

(Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, and Osceola Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Employees increasingly lack a proper work ethic
- The image and appeal of career and technical education and subsequent technical careers is less than desired and needed
- Technology and the use thereof are growing faster than current workers' skill sets.
- Skills of workforce must be upgraded and increased
- Common measures of workforce readiness and occupational assessment are needed

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Determine workforce needs and what skills employers want in new employees; develop common measures of workforce readiness and occupational assessment
 - Engage existing advisory committees throughout the region in the process of reviewing and affirming the validity of workforce needs and workforce readiness documentation
 - Use MEAP at the secondary level and WorkKeys at postsecondary level to assess workplace readiness and occupational assessment
- Improve the technology infrastructure by offering public access to personal computers through libraries and Michigan Works!
- Improve the quality of the existing workforce
- Improve career exploration and decision making through a partnership of students, parents, teachers, businesses, and industries by completing a regional GAP analysis
 - Expand the Educator Academies to offer educators opportunities to collaborate with business and industry
- Develop and use common definitions pertaining to adult education and skill development

Western Upper Peninsula

(Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keheeenaw, and Ontonagon Counties)

EMERGING TRENDS:

- Major dislocations of private sector employees
- Decline in K–12 enrollments

GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

- Improve academic performance in the region
- Improve workforce readiness by establishing new class-size short term adult training programs to meet the skills needs of local employers
- Improve communications between employers and the education/training community by developing a “speakers bureau” of employers for the schools
- Encourage training/education opportunities for existing workforce
- Encourage efforts to increase availability of high-speed Internet communications to serve schools, students, and the community in the region